

**Morgantown Monongalia
Metropolitan Planning Organization Policy Board
Nov 29, 2018 minutes**

Members Present:

Chairman Mike Kelly-Board of Education, Vice-chair Jennifer Selin-City of Morgantown, Treasurer Mayor Patricia Lewis-Granville, Mayor Bill Kawecki-City of Morgantown, Brian Carr-WV DOH, Dave Bruffy-Mountain Line, Delegate Joe Statler-Blacksville, Ron Justice-WVU, Commissioner, Sean Sikora-Monongalia County

MPO Director: Bill Austin

Members Absent:

Commissioner Tom Bloom-Monongalia County, Councilperson Ryan Wallace -City of Morgantown, Councilperson Janice Goodwin-City of Westover, Commissioner Edward Hawkins-Monongalia County, Dominick Claudio-Star City

1. Call to Order

With a quorum present, Chairman Kelly called the Policy Board meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Public Comment Period

No public comments.

3. Committee Reports

a. Citizens Advisory Committee

Bill Rice, Chairman of the CAC, noted that CAC did not have a quorum in the last meeting. The committee discussed the Metropolitan Transportation Plan First Tier Projects Amendment and recognized the value of Morgantown Industrial Park Access Project to the local economy. There was also a concern from the committee members that amending it as a Tier 1 project will undermine the MPO's planning process. Mr. Rice noted that the committee recommended to hire a part-time employee for the public outreach and supported the MPO's participation in the transportation equity group.

b. Finance Report

Treasurer Mayor Lewis noted the financial report as follows:

-- Beginning balance in October \$35,022.91 with expenditures of \$18,658.51 and two deposits of \$8,830.83, leaving a balance of \$25,195.23 at the beginning of November.

Mr. Justice moved to accept the Finance Report as presented; seconded by Mayor Kawecki. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

c. Executive Directors Report

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO is working with consultants on several PIE studies, including West Run Rd project, Greenbag Rd project, Van Voorhis Rd project, and Beechurst Ave project. On the Richwood

Ave-Willey St intersection study, the MPO staff has completed the data collection and identified alternatives to improve the safety and operation of the intersection. The MPO staff was met the city staff and selected most viable options for further investigations.

4. MPO Meeting Calendar

Mr. Austin noted that the MMMPO Meeting calendar for 2019 is included in the agenda package. Mr. Austin noted that the calendar shows the June meeting on June the twenty seventh due to the regular meeting day being West Virginia Day. Commissioner Sikora moved to adopt the 2019 calendar as presented; seconded by Mr. Justice. With no discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

5. Metropolitan Transportation Plan Tier One Project List

Mr. Austin noted that MPO Staff has been contacted by a Policy Board Member who is requesting that the Policy Board consider amending the MPO's Tier One Projects to include the Morgantown Industrial Park Access Project. In order to meet Federal guidelines Tier One projects have to be fiscally constrained by the amount of Federal funding the MPO is anticipated to receive over the next 25 years. Including the Industrial Access project in the Tier One category will require removing one or more projects from the current Tier One List.

Mr. Austin noted that the TTAC expressed concern that the addition of the proposed project to the Tier One list would require the removal of a project or projects from the Tier One list. The projects on the Tier One list had recently been extensively reviewed with the public as part of the recent update of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. To date there has not been a comparable public outreach on modifying the Tier One List to include this project. The TTAC recommended that the Policy Board consider adding the Morgantown Industrial Park Access Project to the list of projects to be funded by other sources or that the Policy Board could include the Project as a Tier Two project. Either designation would make the project eligible for additional study and other funding sources in the future. The CAC did not have a quorum. Several members of the CAC expressed concerns similar to the TTAC's.

Mr Austin noted that the Morgantown Industrial Park Access Project is included in the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan as a project with no prioritization. It is eligible for funding as in current status. The MPO staff has no recommendation on this issue.

Chairman Kelly noted that the partial closure on River Rd increased the need for an additional access to the industrial park. A new access to the industrial park will also improve the bus service to the two schools located on River Rd.

Mr. Justice noted that an additional access to the industrial park will provide great opportunities of economic development for this regional, and the board should move it forward in a timely fashion.

Delegate Statler made a motion to amend the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan to include the Morgantown Industrial Park Access project as a tier 1 project; seconded by by Mr. Justice.

Mr. Bruffy ask if the board should identify which project that is current listed as tier 1 project to be removed to make the Tier 1 project category fiscally constrained.

Delegate Statler noted that currently there is no available funding source for the access project. Moving the project to Tier 1 will facilitate its funding process. Delegate Statler pointed out that the project provides tremendous benefit to local economy by opening up prime land for industrial development and potentially adding hundreds of manufacturing jobs to sustain long term prosperity for this region.

Mr. Carr agreed that the access project brings great economic benefit to this region. He noted that the project is less beneficial to solving traffic issues. He suggested that a better approach to get funding for this project quickly is through the governor's office, emphasizing the significance of its economic benefit. He noted that adding the project to the Tier 1 list at this point undermines the established planning process, as it was not vetted through public participation process. The expedited process is unlikely to be accepted by the FHWA. Mr. Carr also noted that to get this project move quickly, the first step is to get consultants on board to identify the most desirable alternative. Hiring a consultant for such study is not relevant to the tier level of a project. Mr. Carr noted that from the WV DOH perspective, he disagrees with the project being amended in the Tier 1 project list.

Mr. Bruffy concurred with Mr. Carr and suggested to amend this project as a tier 2 project at this meeting.

Commissioner Sikora noted delaying the project may cost economic opportunities and amending this project as Tier 1 project will demonstrate the priority of the community for economic growth and long-term prosperity. Commissioner Sikora noted that a bureaucratic barrier should not prevent the community from the benefit of the project.

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO can hold public meetings for this amendment before the January policy board meeting, which will satisfy the requirement of the MPO's public involvement policy. The policy board can then make a decision on this issue in January with input from the community.

Chairman Kelly opened the floor to allow Mr. Adrian of the Morgantown Industrial Park to speak. Mr. Adrian noted that adding an access to the I-79 interstate from the park will make a large amount of land accessible for commercial development. The location is unique in West Virginia and the project will put the Industrial Park at an advantage in absorbing investment and business. He noted that WVU is doing an economic impact study on this issue.

Mayor Kawecki noted that the report of the economic impact study will be very helpful to demonstrate its economic benefit. He supported to amending this project as a tier 2 project at this meeting, since a tier 2 project is also eligible for funding and it sufficiently demonstrate its importance to the community without diminishing the integrity of the MPO's planning process.

Councilperson Selin agreed and suggested that MPO staff go through the public involvement process for this amendment in a timely fashion, so the board can make a decision on this issue at the January meeting.

Delegate Statler re-made a motion to amend the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan to include the Morgantown Industrial Park Access project as a tier 2 project, and request the MPO staff to conduct public hearing on this issue before the MPO's January policy board meeting; seconded by Mr. Justice. With no further discussion, the motion unanimously passed.

6. Discussion of items for FY 2019-2020 Work Program

Mr. Austin noted that MPO staff is preparing for the Unified Planning Working Program for FY 2019-2020. He asked the board to provide thoughts on items that should be included in the Program. Mr. Austin noted that so far in the current fiscal year the MPO has completed the Morgantown Industrial Park Study, collected data for the City of Morgantown's Willey Street/Richwood Avenue intersection study, worked with the transportation equity group to develop an outreach program for underserved individuals, and selected a firm to conduct the Bicycle and Pedestrian Study. MPO staff has also performed regular administrative duties as well as worked on federally mandated Performance Measures.

Mr. Austin noted that MPO is considering adding a part-time employee who may be shared with Monongalia County. The initial work anticipated for this employee would be website maintenance, the development of an ongoing newsletter, and data collection and aggregation.

This is an informational item and requires no formal actions.

7. Update on Status of Bicycle and Pedestrian Study

Mr. Austin noted that the MPO is pulling together a steering committee meeting for this study. An introductory meeting will be held in December to formalize goals and objectives. Mr. Austin noted that representatives from the WV DOH are actively participating with the projects and he expects a close collaboration of stakeholders on this project.

8. Appointment of Officer Nominating Committee

Mr. Austin noted that according to the MPO's bylaw, the policy board should establish an officer nominating committee to select the MPO officers for the next year. Mr. Justice, Delegate Statler, Mr. Bruffy, and Mr. Kelly volunteered to serve on this committee.

Mr. Austin noted that the annual evaluation form for the MPO's executive director will be distributed to policy board members after this meeting.

11. Meeting Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.